HEALTH
A 31 OCT 56
19

BOROUGH OF TOTNES

Library

The Manor House,
Totnes.

29th August, 1956.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ended 31st December, 1955.

HEALTH LIBRARY

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Estimated population (mid-year 1955).....5,550
Number of inhabited houses.....1,852

VITAL STATISTICS

	Male	Female	Total
Live Births	38	25	63
Legitimate	37	25	
Illegitimate	1		
Still Births	1		1

Birth rate per 1,000 population.....11.35

Birth rate per 1,000 population (England and Wales)....15.0

	Male	Female	Total
Deaths	52	69	121

Death Rate per 1,000 population.....21.8

Death Rate per 1,000 population after allowances for transfer of long term patients in Broomborough Hospital.....16.03

Death Rate per 1,000 population (England and Wales)....11.7

Deaths from Maternal Causes - Nil.

Deaths of infants under 1 year.....1

Classification of Deaths is as follows:-

Tuberculosis.....2
Malignant Neoplasms.....16
Leukaemia.....1
Diabetes.....1
Vascular lesions of nervous system.....19
Heart and Coronary Disease.....36
Other Circulatory Disease.....10
Influenza.....4
Pneumonia.....3
Bronchitis.....4
Peptic Ulcer.....1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases.....19
Motor Vehicle Accidents.....3
All other Accidents.....1
Suicide.....1

As will be seen from the foregoing death statistics, the death rate is abnormally high even after the adjustment has been made for Broomborough Hospital. An examination of the Classification reveals that the increase, in the main, is due to heart and vascular lesions, and this is to be expected in a district where longevity is so outstanding a feature.

INFECTIOUS AND OTHER NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

The classification of the above is as follows:-

Tuberculosis	6	(Pulmonary.....5)
		(Non-pulmonary.....1)
Pneumonia (Influenzal)	2	
Measles	59	
Scarlet Fever	1	
Acute Anterior Poliomyelitis	1	
	69	

MEASLES.

We have experienced quite a large scale measles epidemic this year. It was fortunate that the greatest number of cases occurred in the summer and what a wonderful summer it was. The epidemic was remarkably free from complications and there were not fatal cases recorded.

INFLUENZA.

The influenzal epidemic which began at the end of the preceding year continued into the first three months of this year and two cases of influenzal pnoumonia were notified in January. During the period, four of the deaths registered gave influenza as a contributory cause.

INFANTILE PARALYSIS.

As was the case in the last two years, one notification of acute anterior poliomyelitis was received. This was the case of a child with an atypical form of the infection.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The notificationsthis year show a slight increase on the previous year. We are indebted to the personnel of the Mass Radiography Unit for their help in this and past years . It does much to provide early diagnosis of pulmonary lesions, both tuberculous and non-tuberculous.

DIPTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

There has been no change in the arrangements for the immunisation of children against diptheria. There is a great keenness on the part of the mothers to get the available protection for their children and refusals are rare. The Health Visitors keep a watchful eye on the situation, and thus our usual high percentage is well maintained.

VACCINATION.

As in the past, vaccination is carried out by the general practitioners. Comparative figures are not available, but my experience shows that there is no decline in numbers vaccinated in this District. I was interested to hear, at a recent Conference at Exeter, that the Devon figures for vaccination were greater now than in the days of compulsory vaccination.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

Totnes & District Hospital 24 beds (including 5 cots)

Broomborough Hospital (for chronic cases)	135	beds
" National Assistance Part III Accommodation for residential cases only	43	"
" Maternity Wing	13	"
	12	cots.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Broomborough Maternity Hospital continues to meet our needs and those of the surrounding District and we are fortunate in having such a highly efficient and well equipped unit in the town. Hospitalisation of maternity cases is becoming so popular that 85% of the babies born during this year were born at Broomborough Maternity Hospital. In spite of this very real trend towards hospitalisation, I like to think that there will always be some provision made for domiciliary midwifery. At the present time we have two certified midwives on this District so that those expectant mothers who wish to have their babies at home may do so. Sterilized packs are now provided by the Maternity Service and the modern methods ensure greater safety for mother and child. Antenatal care is carried out by the general practitioners and routine visits are paid by the midwives. A specially equipped ambulance is now available so that premature infants may be conveyed to hospital with the minimum of risk.

The Child Welfare Clinic with its fortnightly after noon session is now a well established institution. The Medical Officer, Health Visitors and District Nurse are in attendance at each Session and are greatly assisted by a very fathful band of voluntary workers who do so much to add to the comfort and well being of the mothers and babies.

NURSING.

Two trained nurses, who are also midwives, are resident in the town and are responsible for the home nursing and maternity work and the situation is very satisfactory.

AMBULANCE.

The Ambulance Service provides two ambulances and drivers and also orderlies as required. Run in conjunction with the Ambulance Service is the Hospital Car Service and this reliable form of transport has proved of great value.

HOME HELPS.

Home helps are available for cases of chronic illness, old age and maternity, blindness, etc.

CARE OF THE AGED.

Great strides have been made during the past few years in providing facilities for the older members of the community. I feel that my report would not be complete without a brief survey of the magnificent work and achievements of the Old Folks Welfare Committee and other interested organisations and institutions in the town. Such a combined effort was certain to provide results. The Old Folks Club, with its weekly meetings and the Old Age Pensioners Association whose members meet every month are now firmly established. The Club affords an opportunity for a friendly chat over the ever-welcome cup of tea and at each meeting some form of entertainment is arranged by the Committee. The Old Age Pensioners Association at its

monthly meetings, gives members the opportunity of obtaining advice on any of their problems and of free exchange of news on things particularly concerning them.

Various Charities and Annuities are used, at the discretion of the Totnes Charity Trustees, to provide comforts, clothing vouchers, etc. for the older folks. The Annual Carnival, too, allots a percentage of its proceeds to provide Xmas gifts.

For some time past it was realised that there was a pressing need for a home for old people whose circumstances made it difficult for them to live alone and look after themselves. To meet this need Pomeroy House was purchased and is being adapted to fulfil the requirements of an Old People's Home and on completion will afford accommodation for sixteen residents as well as the Resident Staff. This voluntary home will be run by the Totnes Housing Society, sponsored by the Welfare Committee, in conjunction with the County Welfare Committee, and the cost of maintenance will be supplemented by the County Fund.

HOUSING.

During the past year 17 three-bedroom houses and 13 Old People's bungalows have been in course of construction at Paige Adams Road, but in view of the diminution of the subsidies I should imagine that the normal housing programme will slow up somewhat, other than that occasioned by Slum Clearance areas. At the time of writing twelve houses at Paige Adams Road have been completed and occupied.

WATER SUPPLY.

No difficulty was experienced during the past summer in either quality or quantity of the Town's water supply. During the continued drought no restrictions whatever were imposed in the use of water and the scheme worked admirably. Bacteriological samples were taken at intervals and excellent results were obtained.

CATERING AND FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS.

The new Food and Drugs Act is expected to come into force very shortly and arrangements are being made to circularise all food establishments on the Hygiene Regulations under the Act.

Several inspections have been made during the year but give no causes for comment.

SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

At no time was there any cause for official complaint.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

These have been periodically inspected and several provisional notices were served on various premises but in no case was it necessary to take legal action.

Elizabeth Davies.

Medical Officer of Health.